



U.S. Department of Justice

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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## **Former Background Investigator For Federal Government Sentenced to Prison For Making a False Statement**

WASHINGTON - Thomas S. Fitzgerald, a former Special Agent of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM), was sentenced today to 90 days of incarceration, 180 days of home detention, and 400 hours of community service on a charge stemming from his falsification of work on background investigations of federal employees and contractors.

The sentencing, which took place in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, was announced by U.S. Attorney Ronald C. Machen Jr. and Patrick E. McFarland, Inspector General for the Office of Personnel Management.

Fitzgerald, 48, of Crofton, Md., pled guilty in March 2011 to one count of making a false statement. He was sentenced by the Honorable Reggie B. Walton. The judge also ordered Fitzgerald to pay \$106,711 in restitution. Upon completion of the 90-day term of incarceration, Fitzgerald will be placed on three years of supervised release, including the home detention.

As part of his guilty plea, Fitzgerald, who worked for OPM's Federal Investigative Services, admitted that he falsified work on background investigations of federal employees and contractors. Between March 2005 and May 2006, in more than two dozen Reports of Investigations on background investigations, Fitzgerald represented that he had interviewed a source or reviewed a record regarding the subject of the background investigation when, in fact, he had not conducted the interview or obtained the record.

All of these reports were utilized and relied upon by the agencies requesting the background investigations to determine whether the subjects were suitable for positions having access to classified information, for positions impacting national security, or for receiving or retaining security clearances.

Fitzgerald's false representations have required OPM's Federal Investigative Services to reopen and rework numerous background investigations that were assigned to him during the

time period of his falsifications, at an estimated cost of \$106,711 to the U.S. government. The restitution in this case will be paid to Federal Investigative Services.

This is one of several cases prosecuted by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia in the last three years involving false representations by background investigators and record checkers working on federal background investigations. Seven background investigators and two record checkers previously were convicted of charges.

Federal Investigative Services, formerly known as the Center for Federal Investigative Services or the Federal Investigative Services Division, through its workforce of approximately 7,300 investigators, is responsible for conducting background investigations for numerous federal agencies and their contractors, on individuals either employed by or seeking employment with those agencies or contractors. Federal Investigative Services processed approximately 2 million investigations in the 2010 fiscal year.

In conducting background investigations, the investigators conduct interviews of individuals who have information about the person who is the subject of the review. In addition, the investigators seek out, obtain, and review documentary evidence, such as employment records, to verify and corroborate information provided by either the subject of the background investigation or by persons interviewed during the investigation. After conducting interviews and obtaining documentary evidence, the investigators prepare a Report of Investigation containing the results of the interviews and document reviews, and electronically submit the material to OPM in Washington, D.C. OPM then provides a copy of the investigative file to the requesting agency, which can use the information to determine an individual's eligibility for employment or a security clearance.

In announcing the sentence, U.S. Attorney Machen and Inspector General McFarland praised the efforts of Special Agent Shantel Robinson, OPM, Office of the Inspector General, and Philip Kroop, Chief of Quality and Integrity Assurance, OPM-Federal Investigative Services. Mr. Machen and Mr. McFarland also acknowledged the work of Assistant U.S. Attorney Ellen Chubin Epstein and former Assistant U.S. Attorney Thomas E. Zeno, who investigated and prosecuted this matter.